



**Menai
Wildflower
Group**



Newsletter of Menai Wildflower Group June 2015

President's Report

Members are eagerly awaiting the APS NSW regional get-together hosted by the Blue Mountains Group on 4-5 July 2015. This event will include talks, garden visits, bushwalks, and birdwatching, all amongst the richness of the iconic mountain bushland landscapes. There will also be plants for sale. There are more details on the APS NSW website. You can now register for this event.

If you ever wanted to show your experience and skills regarding botanical knowledge or want to learn more or just have fun, you can join the APS East Hills group at their Trivia Night on 3rd June starting at 7.30pm. Join other members from MWG to create your own table, or just go feral and jump on empty chairs at any of the tables. It's a fun night with the chance of winning prizes.

At our May meeting Peter and Marg Olde showed us advanced techniques on root stock cuttings and grafting. We will gain further knowledge on this subject at our Saturday meeting on 11 July when Phil Trickett will be explaining his pioneering techniques in this field. This should be a very fulfilling demonstration day.

Our first Saturday meeting will be on 13th June starting at 1pm. Mark Abell will be sharing his knowledge of alpine flora. Also you can stroll through the fire station garden to see what's flowering or budding up for a winter display.

Remember to register with the Blue Mountains group for the Regional Get-together in July so they can prepare for this event.

Jason Cockayne

Coming Local Events

(See Special Interest for others)

- 13 Jun Menai Wildflower Group Meeting**
Guest speaker – Mark Abell
“Alpine flora”- 1pm Sat start
- 20 Jun Working Bee at IRFB 9am start**
- 20 Jun Propagation at IRFS nursery 1pm**
- 4-5 Jul Open Day- Grevillea Park, Bulli**
10-4pm
- 11 Jul Menai Wildflower Group Meeting**
Guest speaker – Phil Trickett
“Grafting” – 1pm Sat start
- 12 Jul Open Day- Grevillea Park, Bulli**
10-4pm
- 18 Jul Working Bee at IRFB 9am start**
- 18 Jul Propagation at IRFS nursery 1pm**
- 24&6 Jul National Tree Days –contact**
Lloyd Hedges

Contents

<i>President's Report</i>	1
<i>Coming Local Events</i>	1
<i>Special Interest</i>	2
<i>April Guest Speaker</i>	2
<i>May Guest Speaker</i>	4
<i>Bushcare and Snake-tongued Orchids</i>	5
<i>Nursery Report</i>	5
<i>RAS 2015</i>	6
<i>Group Meetings</i>	6

From the Treasurer

APS NSW has decided to raise the membership fees in order to cover extra admin and publishing costs. The fees are increasing by \$3 for each category and this is effective from 1Jan 2015 (Note: members with a renewal date prior to 31 March 2015 will pay at the former rate). An updated membership renewal form can be found on our website.

Sharon Pearson

ATTENTION – CHANGE OF MEETING START TIME

We are trialling a new start time. The doors will be open from 6.30pm and the meeting will start at 7pm. Why not come along at 6.30pm for a wander around the garden or chat over a cup of tea.

Special Interest

Deadline for contributions to next newsletter will be Wednesday 29 July'15.

Any items suitable for inclusion in the newsletter may be sent to the Editor (Post to Secretary or e-mail fergsrus@ihug.com.au) before the deadline.

Working Bees at IRFB start at 9am and include weeding, mulching and lunching.

Propagation days are now a regular part of running the nursery at Illawong Rural Fire Station. The next two will be at 1pm on Saturdays 16 June and 18 July.

Nursery group held at the Tip Nursery, Lucas Heights Waste Management site most Monday mornings from 9.30am to 1pm. Please contact Lloyd Hedges if you wish to start attending.

The Group's Website Home Page can be easily accessed by doing a Google search using the phrase "Menai Wildflower Group" and selecting what should be the first option offered.

Visit a neighbouring group

When you joined the Menai Wildflower Group you became a member of the NSW APS and

therefore are welcome at other APS group meetings, bushwalks etc. This gives members a lot more activities to participate in.

Visit the APS NSW website www.austplant.com.au/ and check out what other districts are doing, particularly our neighbours:

Easthills <http://easthills.austplants.com.au/>
and Sutherland <http://sutherland.austplants.com.au/>.

Lloyd Hedges

April Guest Speaker

Talk by Brian Roach who spoke on "Native plants for pots, courtyards and small gardens."

Some of us might be a bit hesitant to grow natives in pots, but Brian put our minds at rest. He recommended a few varieties that do well in pots and some in hanging baskets. Brian said that there are some good reasons for growing natives in pots:

- Display – you can show off your stunning flowering native in a prime position when in full bloom, but hide it away when not at its best
- Mobility – you can move your pot into a sunnier or shadier position depending on your plants requirements at different times of the year
- Nurture – as pots tend to be more easily accessible than plants in the ground you can give them more TLC.

The downside of plants in pots is that some plants may not be suitable, and all require more vigilance – regular watering, weeding and watching out for those curl grubs. He also mentioned that hanging baskets are particularly vulnerable and need extra vigilance and should be seen as a short-term arrangement. However, natives in pots can be spectacular and worth the extra care.

Brian recommended a potting mix that is made up of native potting mix with 60% perlite and 20% coco peat plus some slow release fertiliser. He applies Seasol to all his plants a couple of times a year and if they require a boost he applies Powerfeed.

Brian's top picks for pots are as follows:

- *Boronia crenulata*, *B. floribunda*, *B. pinnata*, *B. serrulata* – all boronias are good in pots and have regular flowering



Boronia crenulata

- *Crowea* 'Summer Star'
- *Lechenaultia biloba*, *L. formosa* – good in hanging baskets
- *Hardenbergia violacea* – short-term in a hanging basket
- *Chamelaucium* 'Whooper Wax'



Chamelaucium 'Whooper Wax'

- *Tetratheca glandulosa*
- *Dendrobium kingianum*
- *Blandfordia grandiflora* (Xmas Bells)
- *Homoranthus prolixus* 'Golditops' – needs winter sun to flower
- *Telopea speciosissima* – Brian recommends this is the best way to grow Waratahs
- *Chorizema cordatum* – good in partial shade – prune to promote more flowering
- *Bauera rubioides x sessiliflora*

- *Isotoma axillaris* – slightly weedy but puts on great floral display
- *Eremophila maculata*



Eremophila maculata prostrate form
(Magenta flowers)

Brian's top picks for plants in small gardens are:

- *Maireana oppositifolia* – light grey foliage – provides a good contrast – copes well in the dry
- *Libertia paniculata* – good in shady, damp spots
- *Olearia languniosa* 'Ghost Town' – grey foliage – good in a hot, dry spot
- *Micromyrtus ciliata* – low growing shrub with many small white flowers that age to pink
- *Grevillea* 'Lady O' – has a long flowering period – it can be pruned but is naturally a small shrub
- *Ziera prostata* – a groundcover that copes in full sun and partial shade
- *Thryptomene baeckeacea* – vibrant pink flowers
- *Patersonia occidentalis* – a robust, clumping plant with purple, 3-petalled flowers
- *Grevillea lanigera* 'Greencape' – small rounded shrub with bright pink spider flowers
- *Rhododendron lochiaie* – best in a sheltered position but requires some dappled sunlight to flower
- *Ceratopetalum gummiferum* 'Johanna's Christmas' – dwarf form the NSW Xmas bush – dark red flowers (sepals)

- *Xerochrysum* 'Lemon Princess' – requires sun and spring rain for good flower colour

Brian finished his talk with the statement 'Australian flora has developed for thousands of years in isolation from the rest of the world – so let's show it off!' I think we would all agree about that.

Sharon Pearson



Seen in Oatley Park. by Sharon Pearson

May Guest Speaker

Peter Olde spoke on cutting grafts after very kindly taking over as speaker at very short notice from Lloyd Hedges, who was indisposed. Thank you, Peter.

Peter went to a workshop with Phil Trickett on cutting grafts, and is very excited about this technique – quick, cheap and effective. V good for Banksias eg *B. praemorsa*, graft onto *B. integrifolia*. Important to get stock (base) & scion (bit from plant you want to propagate) same diameter.

Best to graft from late August to maybe as late as April, not too cold, slow growth.

Need to have – Sharp cutting tools, eg, tin snips, sharpeners (buy at Bunnings), grafting knife or scalpel blade, labels & pencils (**not** biro), decent secateurs for cutting material off plant, Nescofilm for wrapping graft (good because it splits as plant grows), a bucket of clear water, plus chlorine for sterilising. Can use household bleach (dilute 10%). Peter adds a handful of pool chemicals.

All instruments and cuttings must be clean, and also sterilised, ie, dipped in bucket of bleach water.

Root stocks- can prepare in advance. Only need 1 leaf on short stem (?30 to 40 mm) and keep in frig. Recut and stick in glass of water for a couple of days, it will hydrate. (Dunk in cleaning solution, ie containing bleach, before hydrating).

Some people add, eg, Seasol to water, or hormones, but you don't need them and banksias hate hormones (grevilleas like them.) They work a bit faster and give you better rooting.

Now select **scion**. Get clean material, ie, no scale. Need size match to root stock (diameter, cambium of each should match together). Get a bit about 2 inches long, with one leaf axil, containing a dormant bud. The smaller the diameter, the more difficult to work with.

Dip scion in the clean (bleach) water. Dry off, in air or use paper towel.

Get clean scalpel blade, dip in bleach water, and cut down middle of top of root stock. – 10 to 15 mm. Hold blade in left hand and push stock against blade, **don't push blade**.

Now cut scion bottom end into a long wedge (don't have to make it a V point) and push top into the split in the stock. The outside edges, ie, cambium, of each should match. Now wrap with Nescofilm. Peter cuts it into 5 inch strips. Cover whole of wound, go round over the top so water can't go back into wound.

Now shove in pot nearly to level of graft and water it in, and keep in a place where it won't dry out.

How to know what stock to use for what scion? Draw on published info, what is compatible. *B. praemorsa* is compatible with *integrifolia*, which is resistant to phytophthora. Can take cutting material home and keep in frig, but rootstocks especially better fresh.

Hot house? Not really necessary. Can make your own green house, put a plastic box on top of your cuttings. Let the air in, open them up at night. Keep them moist but not wet, depends on your potting mix how often you need to water. Do what works for you in your area,

expect 10% success rate – tray of cuttings Peter brought in he thinks he may have 50% success rate, but so quick to do doesn't matter if you have a low rate of success.

Banksias – use *integrifolia* or *serrata*. Isopogons, can use *anethifolia* on some. Grevillea – Bronze Rambler, robusta, Royal Mantle. (See Olde Grevillea book 1, grouped with relations) Related species graft more readily. Look for hybrids, vigorous. Group 35 the most important one.

Grevilleas will graft on to Hakeas, Dryandras on to Banksias, Isopogons on to Isopogons, **not** on to Petrophile (DNA different), pimeleas eg Qualup Bells on to Pimeleas eg ferrunginia for root stock. *Darwinia citriodora* good for all Myrtaceae. Eremophilas on to other eremophilas & Myoporum (they shoot underneath).

Can use this method with Acacias & Flowering Gums(Corymbias on to citriodora)

Use ordinary potting mix (Peter use Debco), and for cuttings adds 30-50% Perlite. Perlite drains faster than sand; adjust watering regime according to potting mix. Can add bit of Seasol, no hormones on Banksias, but Grevilleas love them. Artificial light fine.

If plant in flower – don't use flowering wood, use a different branch. Best time, Spring. Best not to put 3 or more in pot, will have to divide them at some stage, and more risk of something going wrong. If plants spread apart a bit, less chance of disease spreading. Shooting can come quickly, roots later. Have a look at Banksia Study Group newsletters for what grafts on to integrifolias.

B grandis is compatible.

B hookeriana v difficult to graft.

Mary Hedges

Bushcare and Snake-tongued Orchids

A couple of years ago while digging out African love grass we came across a Greenhood orchid that was unfamiliar. With the help of another Bushcare volunteer, Margaret Bradhurst, we learned that it was a

Pterostylis and the species name was *ophioglossa* which means snake tongued. It was only the second time this species had been recorded in Sydney



Pterostylis ophioglossa

Just recently when the subject came up while chatting with another Bushcare volunteer Steve Deards he said he had come across the species years before at another Bushcare site. And so it proved.

So now Sutherland Shire has this orchid in two locations. The amount of knowledge among Bushcare volunteers is formidable.

Lloyd Hedges

Nursery Report

The final ute load of tube stock (about 3000 in total) grown for the regeneration of the RNP's Coastal tTrack has been picked up. Anyone interesting in volunteering for a day to help plant some of them should contact Lloyd.



The nursery volunteers have been boosted by our new member Marian Whatman.

Thanks to all who contributed on the last Working Bee. It was the best effort in some time and some serious work got done.

The Propagation days at the IRFB on the third Saturday of the month have been receiving a steady trickle of interested visitors

Lloyd Hedges

RAS 2015

This year our MWG continued its tradition of entering the Royal Easter Shower flower competition over two days. Thanks to all those who contributed their flowers for our arrangements. We relied on our blooms from the Illawong RFS and contributions from members, including the Oldes, Jennifer McLaine-Cross, Helen patience and the Pattersons.

We were really happy to receive Firsts for flowers we had grown locally, including the Grand Champion Award for Helen's sturts Desert Pea in its handsome pot. In all, MWG entries did us proud.

Many visitors, and even colleagues, were intrigued at the beauty of the Banksia arrangements on the second day of Australian plants on show.

We hope that more groups will enter the exhibition in 2016 – to keep us on our toes!

Pam Pitkeathly



Group Meetings

Monthly meetings (except January) of the Menai Wildflower Group are usually held at 7:00pm on the second Wednesday each month, although we have introduced day-time

meetings for some of the months. The venue is the Illawong Rural Fire Brigade Headquarters. New members and friends are welcome.

Please address all correspondence to the Secretary,
PO Box 3104 Bangor NSW 2234

Website is www.menaiwildflower.austplants.com.au

E-mail is menaiwildflower@austplants.com.au

President	Jason Cockayne	9570-8559
Vice President		
Secretary	Annette Tuckfield	9543 - 1490
Treasurer	Sharon Pearson	9570-8559
Editor	Alan Ferguson	9543-8216
APS-NSW Delegate	Mary Hedges	9543-1216
General Committee	Pam Forbes	9543-6224
	Margaret Olde	9543-2242
	Marion Payne	9543-1040
	Pam Pitkeathly	9771- 9789